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1852

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

BEFORE

THE SOCIETY OF THE ALUMNI,

ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR

ANNUAL CELEBRATION, NOVEMBER 15th, 1852;

BY

THE REV. GEORGE POTTS, D.D.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY KING & BAIRD.

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In exchange
Peabody Institute
Baltimore
AUG 2 . 1928

CORRESPONDENCE.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

Philadelphia, Dec. 23, 1852.

DEAR SIR :

At a Stated Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Society of the Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, we were unanimously appointed a Committee to communicate to you the thanks of the Society, for the very able, instructive, and eloquent address, which you delivered before them, on their recent Anniversary, and to solicit from you a copy of it for publication.

In communicating this resolution, and indulging the hope that you will comply with the wishes of the Society, allow us, ourselves, to express the great gratification we enjoyed on the occasion, enhanced as it was, by the pleasure of welcoming your visit from a distant City to the scene of your early collegiate associations, and our own.

With great respect, very truly and faithfully yours,

HENRY D. GILPIN,

W. R. WISTER,

J. M. COLLINS,

CHARLES BURGIN,

H. D. GREGORY.

To THE REV. GEORGE POTTS, D.D.

New York, February 14th, 1853.

GENTLEMEN :

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, on behalf of the Society of the Alumni, and in compliance with their request, place my Address at your disposal.

Very respectfully yours,

GEORGE POTTS.

To MESSRS. HENRY D. GILPIN, W. R. WISTER, J. M. COLLINS,
CHARLES BURGIN, H. D. GREGORY, Committee.

A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN :

It is not without deep sensibility that I find myself here to day: in my native city, among the memorials of my boyhood, and joining you in the duty of bringing your annual tribute of grateful recollections to our common Alma Mater. In the honor you have done me in appointing me to so large a share in the festivities of your anniversary, two of my respected classmates of 1819,* have preceded me. I find in these coincidences an augury of hope for myself, that you are predisposed to regard with favor the remarks I have to make—and they also revive into something of youthful freshness, the remembrance of those early days when all the members of that class were still growing, side by side, in this nursery of learning; manly lads, I must say, with a very fair share of ardor, but no mean rivalries, in the pursuit of improvement. Some of us have been removed to distant places, and some have gone, I hope, to the better land. Some have reached posts of distinction and usefulness, and of those who survive, I feel that it may be asserted with truth, that they will yield to no other class in affectionate recollection of their Alma Mater. You will pardon me for this passing tribute,

* The Hon. R. J. Walker, and the Hon. Henry D. Gilpin.

in which I am sure my ancient friends will join me, to the by-gone days of our college course.

Like the attachments of birth place, family, and country—the feelings which rally us to-day, find their roots struck deep in the soil of the past. In all our best qualities, our highest interests, our keenest enjoyments—we can easily trace the signs of derivation, and therefore of dependance, and therefore of obligation, to sources now out of sight. There is much proud talk, indeed, in certain quarters, of *self-made* men; but, in any case, the man who claims the title, shows that in the process of self making, he has omitted the elements—good sense and modesty. No man, however great the inherent energy of his nature, or however eminent his merits, or however numerous the disadvantages over which he has triumphed, has a right to overlook the fact that, after all, he owes much the larger share of his attainments and usefulness to ancestral labors, which smoothed the way for him, and started him in his career with an inherited capital. He should remember the schools, however poor, the books, however few, the teachers, however imperfectly qualified, the companionship, however immature, all of which in an important degree were like the flint to his steel, without which there would have been no sparks because no collision—or the whet-stone to his tool, without which the tool could not have been sharpened. No, even if in respect to the least meritorious of his acquirements—his money—a man cannot with strict truth be said to

be *self-made*—much less can he secure the treasure of knowledge, unless by drawing upon the accumulations of predecessors. Just as every river, though it be a broad and fertilizing “father of waters,” must derive its drops from distant head-springs, and its alluvion from the deposites of the past.

In this grand fact, that the Maker of all has mysteriously and beautifully constituted human beings in dependant generations linked together, and not in isolated creations, each of which must struggle by itself out of infancy into maturity, each be left to get what he can without aid from the past, as well as without power to make the future the heirs of his attainments; in this grand fact, I say, we not only have the reasons for a becoming modesty, in regard to our highest attainments, but it is the noble source of the grateful recollections which have brought us together to day. It is good to refresh our feelings of dependance upon that humble germ planted here more than a century ago,—a venerable antiquity for America—whose living sap has imparted a portion of its vitality to successive seeds, which have been borne by the winds of providence to the favorable spots where they have struck root and flourished. Whatever the fruitfulness of the shoots, their genealogy, so to speak, ought never to be ignored by the stateliest of them all, with supercilious ingratitude. Filial impiety, whether its object be a literal or figurative parent, is one of the most disgusting diseases of our nature, and should be banned among us.

We believe with a great statesman and philosopher, that "people who do not look backward with appropriate feelings to their ancestors, will not look forward to their posterity." We are loyal scholars: we do not believe in repudiation of debts of any kind, least of all debts to the disinterested benefactors, the founders, care-takers, and teachers of our university. It is one of the purposes of this anniversary, to recall, in imagination, the first meeting of the few, Franklin at their head, who in 1743, desired to see a broad foundation laid for an institution of learning. How much, closely affecting our interests, was involved in those first conferences ; in the financial struggle ; in the adjustment of prejudices and preferences ; in the resolute perseverance required to avert or resist the jealousies of some, the ignorance of others, the parsimony of others, and the indifference (the true *vis inertiae* hardest to be overcome) of others, before even a humble beginning could be made in carrying out their purpose of establishing an institution, which (to use their own admirable language) "through the blessing of God, and the bounty and "patronage of pious and well disposed persons, might "be of great and lasting benefit to the present and "future generations?" And coming down to later periods—is there one here, who can be insensible to the claims of the several administrations by which the instructions of our Alma Mater have been dispensed : one who does not recal the friendly faces of his personal instructors, some of whom are no longer among the

living: one who does not feel ashamed, if he ever vexed then with his boyish trifling: one who is not pleased in remembering the gratification which glistened in their eyes at every evidence of his improvement under their instructions? Excellent and venerable men! We look back and wonder at your forbearance and patience and now that the conceited presumption of youth is gone by, we could wish you were here to receive the grateful testimony of our humbler maturity, which, with a better appreciation of your services, vents itself in hearty expressions of sorrow that we did not more thoroughly profit by your teaching and example. Many buffetings from the rude hand of experience would they have saved us.

Their places are now held by others. Those of us, who find that the period of a generation has passed since they left the noble halls of this university, and who have, like myself, been all that time exiles from their birth-place, will know the present guides of this institution only by the fame of a well earned reputation. But this does not lessen the peculiar feelings with which we rejoice to hear of her well-doing. The institution of learning has the same mysterious kind of identity as the other great organisms of society, the family, the church, the state, a "permanent body composed of transitory parts;" and whatever the changes of its transitory parts, its successive epochs will call forth a continuous interest in its teachers, and pupils, and in the manner in which they perform their duties.

Especially to those ancients, who are on the ground, the present and prospective condition of this university will be a subject of deep concern. I heartily echo the very true and able remarks of one of my predecessors on this occasion, when he lays the responsibility of protecting and strengthening the University of Pennsylvania, mainly at the door of her Philadelphia alumni. They must keep her in mind, cheer her efforts, encourage her teachers, endow her with gifts, for her professorships, her library, her scientific furniture: they must be loyal to her by standing by each other's fame and usefulness. And they must stimulate her scholars by their presence at those examinations and public exercises where the fledglings are pluming and trying their wings. They must have praise ready for the worthy competitors in the stadium, and to the faithful *trainers* they must be able and ready to do all honor. They must feel that their interest in her may be well suspected, when they will not demonstrate it by the sacrifice of an occasional hour or even day upon her altars. I cannot be mistaken—no one who looks back upon his college days can be mistaken, in laying a great stress upon the effect of such a demonstrative interest on the part of the *alumni*, on the great festive occasions of the institution. Thus has the *esprit du corps* of our most successful colleges been fostered, until now, every successive class which goes from them is sure that its struggles and triumphs are witnessed with a sincere interest by their predecessors. Colleges

—as well as many other great associations—are kept up to the point of lively activity, by the confidence and sympathy, especially of those who have enjoyed their advantages. All successful developement requires an outer as well as an inner force, and in this instance one of the outer forces is the steady, earnest, dutiful countenance which the intelligent give to the places of their mental culture, and the interest they continue to manifest by actual attendance on her successive festal occasions. For instance—and I cite the instance to illustrate the purport of these remarks—should the great occasion of Commencement be largely attended, not merely by the parents, sisters, and friends of the graduating class, but by the cultivated scholars who have won for themselves a place of honor in society, the effect of their presence would be powerfully felt as a stimulus and a reward to the efforts of both faculty and student. It would go far to establish and give power to the noble and wide spread influence which is the glory of a seat of learning. Coming forth under the eyes of competent judges, they would all aim at a thorough preparation. We are tempted, I know,—we are all tempted to be “*laudatores temporis acti*;” but even though we admit that this inclination partakes of an altogether affectionate character, that it has no mingling of contracted self-conceit in it, no one has rightly read the lessons of human duty, taught him in the *past*, who forgets the *present* and the *future*; because in a generous mind, a truly affectionate remembrance of its

co-temporaries in the past, will keep alive a strong sympathy in the new generation who occupy their places. We do not wish any one to forget his first putting on the *toga virilis*, the college gown; the first composition; the first speech from the rostrum; the first immense access of self-respect, when *mistered* by a Professor; or any of the other steps in the long series which led him up to manly self-reliance? The smile with which we now greet the recollection of these grand events of the college era, will not be one of contempt, for all of them exercised an influence as powerful at the time, as those other grand exercises—the first triumph at the bar, the first cure of a patient, the first election to office, the first feat of authorship. They were the incitements to continued effort, and the earnests of success. Shall the remembrance of these early foot-races, be obliterated by the sterner conflicts of life? No! let not the veteran of the old guard despise the new conscript; for the history of the one, will, in all substantial respects, be the history of the other, and he ought to have all the aid which the veteran's manifestation of interest and sympathy can give him.

So much notice, gentlemen, you will allow to the recollections of the old times, and the suggestion of some of the minor duties we owe to the present and coming generations of teachers and taught, who are to occupy, successively, the care of this nursing mother. I have felt some embarrassment in the selection of a single topic which, without wearisome prolixity or

triteness, might profitably occupy the remainder of the time devoted to this exercise. Those who have been honored with the call of the various alumni associations of our institutions of learning for the last dozen years, have well nigh exhausted the subjects suitable for such occasions. The praises of Literature and Science—the characteristics of the various systems of learning, and the improvements that may be made in them—the claims of classical studies, assailed by those who deem them unsuited to this so-called practical age—the extension of education to the masses, and its relations to social progress; these and kindred themes have been well-nigh exhausted. Wishing to make the most, in my humble way, of the opportunity of addressing so many cultivated minds, to whom the state looks for the influences which are to mould and guide her, I would regard your invitation, not simply as conferring a pleasure and an honor, but as imposing a duty, to the discharge of which I should bring the best qualities I possess. I beg you to remember, that of the numerous ministers of religion who have gone forth from our alma mater, I am the first whom you have appointed to this occasion. I trust, therefore, that you will agree with me that I ought not to overlook the relation which we, and our common mother, bear to the supreme subjects which have occupied the larger share of my thoughts. That you will not, I am led to believe from the fact which I mention with unspeakable satisfaction, that every one of my predecessors has, in

emphatic language, expressed his conviction that our parent college is and ought to be Christian in its teachings and general influence: that the grand authority of the word of God should be recognized in its instructions and discipline. To these, gentlemen, I owe my theme. Without professional cant, or sectarian dogmatism, but from the stand-point of our common Christianity, I beg to lay before you, in an informal manner, some remarks on

*The social conservatism of our Colleges and Seminaries
of Learning.*

If any one should ask me to define the familiar term — Conservatism — I might say that its origin, within our own recollection, implies that there is something which society is in danger of losing, and which ought to be rescued from the hands of men eager for change. But, added to this essential thought is now another, which is also included in the word, namely, the correction of what is evil in the condition and action of society. Conservatism is not a mere negation, but a positive force ; it not only proposes to guard what is valuable, but to reform what is mischievous. It is in this double sense that we shall employ the term. We believe that it is desirable the vessel should move as *fast* as is consistent with safety, and that to do this, she needs a good suit of canvass well trimmed, and a good hand at the tiller, as well as sufficient ballast ; we believe, indeed, that the latter without the former, will settle her in the trough of the

sea and sink her : so, if conservatism be the exercise of the power of standing still, it must perish in its stupidity. We repudiate the “let alone” policy which teaches that there can be no change which will not mar more than it mends. We devoutly believe—it is a part of our religion to believe—that there is and ought to be an agitation which is desirable—change which is useful—progress which is improvement. And further, and notwithstanding the tiresome fulsomeness with which our age is bepraised, as the age of progress *par eminence*, we wish to be distinctly understood as accepting its claims in some valuable respects. But not only do I avowedly number myself among those stupid people who think that the *extent* of our advances upon former ages is greatly over-estimated, and that much of it, as some one has wittily said, has been like that military movement called *mark time*, in which there is more noise than advance—but worse than this—I think that the *value* of these advances has been still more exaggerated. If many things ought to be changed, still all change is not improvement ; whatever is new is not necessarily good and true. I like action, but not violent uncontrolled action, and reform, but not reform which pulls down every thing before it will build any thing. In short, the conservatism for which I plead, recognizes the great primary law, that whatever activity is given, even to those forces which are intended to affect society favorably, is liable to dangers similar to those which attend all powerful excitement

on the individual. It may overrun the point of health, and become wild and delirious—it may get beyond the control of the balance wheel and the breaks, and (you will pardon the triteness of the comparison for the sake of its fitness,) it may drag the train so fast along the curves, as to throw it off at a tangent. This would be progress, but in the wrong direction. Catastrophes, of which this is a faint analogy, await society with its valuable freight of high, civil and moral interests, unless care be taken to provide it with a good road in the first place, and then with prudent and temperate engineers, in whose view safety is as important a consideration as speed. They must be, in one sense of the word, conservative; they must know their business and attend to it; they must watch the road, the machine, the fuel, and then, (and this I am simple enough to regard as the final cause of all contrivances for locomotion,) then they will take care of the passengers, and bring them to their journey's end without crushing some and endangering all.

But the general question now presents itself, whether, in the period in which we live, any causes are at work, which create a special necessity for the negative or positive action of such a conservatism as that which has been just defined? Are there special tendencies or actual evils which excite the solicitude or demand the energies of the loyal Christian scholar, who, by the very force of those terms is a patriot and philanthropist? Or—for this may be a question with some—is the

character of society settled by causes, is it subject to a motion, which are beyond our influence? Has it a destiny, in short, which it *must* reach by an inexorable necessity, and the attempt to forward or retard which, would be a weak presumption on our part.

To take the last of these questions first—because, where the fatalism which underlies it exists in any mind, our interest in the character of our cotemporaries and successors, must be one of mere curious but helpless anxiety, instead of a deep personal responsibility; and beget the selfish inertia which has so often robbed society of powers that, if well employed, might have proved of value. Not even in the midst of the greatest social obliquities are men entitled to succumb without an effort to ward off the evil; and specially detestable is the frivolous desperation, which determines to sport to the last, even with the mutterings of approaching earthquakes in its ears; dancing and smiling, and making the prospective evil the subject of epigrammatic wit, as it says,—“After us, the deluge.” We hold then, that the motion of society, though rapid and complicated, is always in a high degree an intelligent and voluntary motion, capable of being brought under the application of moral laws and powers. It is only in a partial degree that the character of society is determined by forces out of our reach. As a general law, divinely established, national, and social, and personal peculiarities are often transmitted for generations together; a fact which satisfies us that all social

changes are so slow in their movement as to take them out of the domain of fatalities which can neither be helped nor hindered, and place them among results for which the actors in them are, each in his degree, responsible. We talk of sudden revolutions; but no revolution, though its crisis may arrive with a startling vehemence which astonishes the unobservant, is in fact, without a long preparatory stage. It began when the reptiles, too weak to scale the walls, burrowed beneath the foundations of the citadel. It began when the first drops of acid were deposited on the steel which no directly applied force could break. All the great catastrophes of the world were the harvests of a previous seed time. Human agencies were their parents. The word and providence of God assure us of the fact, that each successive generation must of necessity, and according as it obeys or violates the eternal laws of obligation, be employed not only in receiving but in giving those successive impulses which bear the nations upward from a rude barbarism, or downward from a lofty civilization. It is upon their capacity of learning from the experience of by-gone generations that our hope of the improvement of the race depends; it is this which distinguishes the movements of man from those of the lower creations. The bird builds its nest and the beaver its dam skilfully, but no more skilfully now than they did a thousand years ago.

But enough upon a point which I hope requires no

further pleading among a band of scholars, who cannot be blind to the general lesson which the philosophy of history teaches,—namely, that national progress and decline have intelligible and controllable social causes, for the power of which, and often for their very existence, individuals are accountable. The question now returns on us, what special tendencies exist at the present time which ought to call forth the positive and negative conservatism of every loyal christian institution of learning, and every loyal christian scholar who loves his country and his race with an intelligent affection ? In maintaining that there are such tendencies, I do not wish to side with either of the two parties who are engaged, the one in disparaging, the other in extravagantly eulogising *the age*, as it is called. I think that substantially, it is very much like previous ages—having like them its good, bad, and indifferent characteristics. Truth, as usual, lies between the boasters who glorify it, and the alarmists who asperse it. If we have gained on “the wisdom of our ancestors” in some things, we have lost much in others. The world has not reached just yet the acme, but has much to learn, much to reform, much to counteract; and quite as much of humility as of pride ought to follow from our comparison between the present and the past. Even in that which is perhaps the most legitimate and peculiar praise of the age—I mean its improvement in physical science and discovery as applied to mechanism—it is well to recollect that the ancients knew and

could do many things in this field almost as well as we can. Even the motive powers of our day, gigantic as they are, might stand respectfully in the presence of those lost powers which raised the Pyramids and the other structures of antiquity. Researches amidst the ruins of Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, and Roman, even of Chinese and Hindoo civilization, tell us that many arts once known to them, are now unknown to us, and that others which we claim as of modern discovery, were also used among them : a pregnant fact, in whatever light we view it. Only the other day, Sir David Brewster exhibited a plano-concave lens found in exploring the ruins of Ninevah. In the fine arts, statuary and architecture especially, we are but copyists of an excellence yet unsurpassed. In poetry, eloquence, and even speculative philosophy, their great men are models for all future time. We are but editors of their works, with now and then an improvement.* Yes,—and it should be one of the objects of our scholarly conservatism, to make the braggarts of this *practical* age, this *age of progress*, know and feel this, that if in some things we stand high, it is because we stand upon the shoulders of our predecessors, while in other things we have not reached their knees : that our most luxuriant vegetation owes much of its splendour, and certainly its life, to the accumulated soil of centuries silently bestow-

* Although with a sagacious writer of the last century, we may believe and say “the wombe of time bringeth forth many new truths:” it is even more largely true to say with the same writer, “Time but putteth new robes on old truths.”—RUTHERFORD.

ing its juices upon the unconscious and ungrateful growths of the present.

But on the other hand, our modern croakers and alarmists may also gather a lesson from a comparison of past and present. If it teaches boasters to be modest, it administers some comfort to those who see nothing but the dark lining of the cloud, and who look upon the agitations and changes of society, present and prospective, as proofs that the world is rushing into "chaos and old night." Let them know that the world has weathered even greater storms. True : gigantic and perilous doctrines are taught : for as some one has said, "though errors die, error is immortal." It has indeed a strange periodicity and reproductiveness. Both speculative and practical errors move in a cycle ; like eclipses you can almost foretell when they will occur, and how much they will darken the truth. We are now called to do battle with the same sophisms which employed the wits of Socrates and Plato, and of the noble souls of later times, who, out of the purer philosophy of Christianity, have forged still more effectual weapons for the overthrow of materializing scepticism. Our orators are using the same weapons which Demosthenes, Cicero, and other masters of eloquence wielded. Our social reformers and political charlatans, our quacks and dupes, our knaves and fools, our Dives rolling in luxury, our paupers rotting at his gate, what are they but substantial reproductions of the types which are described in the records of Thucidydes, Tacitus, Livy,

Moses, David, Solomon, and other worthies of history, sacred and profane. The prodigies of superstition, which are at this moment drawing upon the rich fund of dupery, which the ignorant supply and which the knaves know how to use, are matched by similar prodigies of imposition of a former age. The pirates which prey upon the world, are dressed in the cast-off clothes of their predecessors: their weapons are the same—the same preposterous schemes for the reform of the world, the same reliance upon a mere change in the physical conditions of humanity, the same stale arguments against spiritualism, the same malignity peeping out of the cloak of reason and philanthropy, which marked Bishop Berkeley's times, and the era of the French encyclopædistes, and the same family likeness among their offspring: And finally—to show the substantial identity of different and distant eras—let us hear a modern describe a certain class of the youth of our day, “They would quiz their father and mother, and lover and friend. They discuss sun and planets, liberty and fate, love and death, over the soup. They never sleep, go nowhere, stay nowhere, eat nothing, and know nobody, but are up to anything, were it the Genesis of nature, or the last cataclasm—Festus-like, Faust-like, Jove-like—and could write an Iliad any rainy morning, if fame were not such a bore. Men, women, though the greatest and fairest, are stupid things, but a rifle and a mild gunpowder, a spaniel and a segar, are themes for Olympus.” Now hear good

Pliny describe the Roman youth of his time—"Rarum hoc in adolescentibus nostris : nam quoties quisque vel ætati ulterius vel auctoritati, ut minor cedit? Statim sapiunt: statim sciunt omnia: neminem verentur: imitantur neminem: atque ipsi sibi exempla sunt." How like the two pictures in the great outlines of human nature under similar conditions!

It were easy to multiply these resemblances. But interesting as it would be to pursue this study of *comparative history*, (as worthy of attention as comparative anatomy in its way,) we must be satisfied with this general statement of the facts—for the sake of the most important inference which it yields, namely, that it is a gross error to imagine *that society has always been moving forward in a straight line of progress*, each successive age being a positive advance upon its predecessors: and notwithstanding vicissitudes, notwithstanding the eddies and ebullitions of the stream, inherent and resistless laws of its own are carrying it into wider and smoother channels. That it has no such inherent laws, which of necessity secure a higher and higher development, the facts we have given prove conclusively. Now if you ask me whether such a development may not be secured, and whether it ought not to be the concern of every age that it should be secured: I answer, truly it should: truly it is the shame and guilt of mankind that it is not so. Nor can a true philosophy and a true religion be content till this "travelling the circuit" of error, this running off into vagaries, this loss of gains,

this reproduction of follies and crimes shall be arrested. We want the high road of life improved—so that all who journey on through the nights and days of time can travel upon its capacious bosom with an increasing intelligence, safety, and comfort. And it is to the removal of obstructions now to be found in this grand highway, that every learned institution, and every cultivated man should lend all his energies.

Turn now to a survey of some of the hindrances to the highest social developement, which a practical christian conservatism commends to our men of culture. I notice only those which are specially characteristics of the age, and which are of importance only as they foment disturbance and promote the morbid social action which insome form belongs to every age.

In the *first* place then, we need to do all we can to conjure into calmness the unquiet spirit of the times, whose excitements amount in many respects to disease. If we seek for the source of the excitement, I think we must admit that it has been indirectly called into activity by the improvements in mechanical contrivances, those especially which are applied to labor and locomotion. They have had the perceptible effect not only of materializing the mind of society, by obtruding material interests upon the attention, as the grand interests, but of exasperating the activity of the world, into something very like fury. Time has been virtually lengthened, space has been virtually shortened, wealth and physical comfort promoted, but when as the grand result, we

had a right to look for leisure, and the repose and reflectiveness which leisure is supposed to give, an opposite result presents itself. Notwithstanding the hours which science and labor-saving ingenuity have added to the term of life, instead of lessening toil and increasing opportunities of inward culture, is it not a fact that time is more than ever crowded with exciting demands upon toil? Life is more toil-worn than ever, and countenances more haggard from the excited hurry which is necessary to overtake one's day's work. Do we set off upon our travels, it is true we move fast, so fast that we cannot read the inscription on the mile measure, but we are disturbed at the recollection that the speed is dearly bought—and that pushing, burning, scalding, crushing, drowning, have come to be the five categories of modern locomotion. As to the day laborer, while the steam-engine has spared one set of muscles, it has wearied another; and because more work can be done, more is demanded, and the cry from the steam-press, the steam-vessel, the steam-car, the steam-factory, the magnetic wires, is give, give! Our horse-leech has not two, but many daughters.

Added to this, the same cause is increasing the disturbed action of society by giving a vast momentum to remote influences, which come trooping in, one after another, without intermission. The universal world is at our door every morning. Instead of ceremonious visits, when after quiet intervals of a month or two, some lumbering vessel brought the news, now we have

daily, almost hourly notices of all the movements of London, Paris, and other neighbours poured into our ears. Besides that, many, invited by the facilities for locomotion, quit their quiet anchoring ground in search of the exciting pleasures of the luxurious old world, and return with reluctance to the tameness of a home-life ; great masses of human beings, with new impulses, and in search of new destinies, are in motion, and sea and land are crowded with the caravans, portending a fusion, mayhap a confusion of the nations ; since the irruptions of the Northern tribes upon the fertile regions of the Roman empire, and the crusades which filled Asia with the sweepings of Europe, the world has seen nothing like it. Novelty succeeds novelty in the department of scientific invention and discovery ; plan succeeds plan for extending commerce ; the door of China, (and next it may be of Japan,) is battered in, to let in opium and European civilization, and to let out the pent-up myriads, thousands of whom (and who can forecast the bearings of the fact ?) are crowding to our shores. Territory is conquered or coveted : lands unknown awhile since, reveal by accident the mineral treasures which all men covet, and draw excited thousands from every quarter : revolutions flare up, and though smothered, none can tell when they will flare up again : despotisms are converted into republics without ceremony, and republics are reconverted in a marvellously short time into despotisms of the most flagrant sort : yesterday every body

was allowed to speak and propound the most disorganizing changes for society—to-day nobody is permitted to speak unless after an established model. All these, and more occurrences like them, are keeping the world at the top of its speed—and men ask what will come next? The world is out of breath: its big heart is beating, its big brain is reeling.

Physicians tell us that the best use which they can imagine for the organ called the spleen—and the purpose of which is still a matter of guess—is to act as a waste-gate to the system, by drawing from the blood vessels a portion of their contents, when the man is under some powerful excitement, and in this way relieve the brain. Does not society need some such organ to save it from the peril of congestion? When shock succeeds shock so rapidly, where is the sedative which will avert delirium, or what is equally evil, the lethargic indifference which nothing can interest except the occurrence of some marvel greater than those which have added to its powers? It is a serious symptom, when "*nil admirari*" becomes the universal motto—and to this, it seems to me, there is a great danger of our reaching, seeing that it is already becoming tiresome to hear of the strange feats and strange movements which are only a few years old. In the way of mechanical novelties, what would be more than a nine days' wonder? There are hundreds among us who would scarcely walk to Fairmount to see a man fly.

In such a state of incessant disturbance from with-

out, we need some composing influence within; we need some *lapis Lydius* that will put these things to a sound and sufficient test—and where shall we find it?

Gentlemen, it lies in the conservative power of those high truths which teach the world that, whatever attractions life and even its purest and nobler pursuits, namely those of science and learning, have, they are truly small when compared with the boundless attractions which belong to the higher department of our nature, and that the noblest condition of society is one over all the engagements of which shall preside a profound regard to those motive principles which affect its moral well-being. It is not to the Pulpit alone that the elucidation and enforcing of these principles should be left. The part which the religious organisms of our day are striving to perform, by carrying these principles into the homes of the land, must after all depend for success upon something which necessarily affects them all. I mean the Institutions of learning, where the first systematic impressions are made upon the intellectual character of that class of minds who may be expected to lead society by the force of their superior knowledge. From them must come the statesmen and authors, the professional men and journalists; the latter already wielding a vast power; who are to give tone to the public mind? Hence their responsibility, and here, their real dignity and glory.

Not to dwell upon the tranquilizing effect of a wise exertion of their influence in respect to the mere culti-

vation of the thinking faculty—and the mere communication of knowledge as such—they are called upon to do much more than this as conservators of society, by giving a right direction to the faculties they are engaged in cultivating and developing. Highly as we respect attainments in knowledge of any kind, highly as we regard the investigations of science in the departments of physics or metaphysics, we should be not only sorry to see any department of it so cultivated as to make it an end instead of a means; but especially sorry to see it pursued in such a manner as to concentrate the main attention upon the material, and not the moral relations of mankind. It has been said of a mere metaphysician, who deals only with the dry abstractions of mental science, that he is

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
 No form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
 An intellectual all in all.

But is not this equally true of the mere linguist, the mere rhetorician, the mere astronomer, geologist, chemist, or mathematician? One-sided culture is always bad, and has been happily compared to the statues in a frieze, finished on one side, jagged and unsightly on the other. If we *must* have only one side finished, let it be that which includes the most important features and limbs. And what are these? What qualities of the body politic could be best parted with—those which are now throwing social life into a ferment—those which add to the

already impetuous tendency of the age to think and act in view of a material prosperity—those which make a rich, luxurious, polished, or conquering people—or those which go to form the honest man, the good parent and child, the faithful husband and wife, the active philanthropist, the just judge and lawgiver? Could not society dispense with all the other sciences more safely than with that noblest science—duty? The world cannot get on without that, whereas it might answer all the highest ends of social organization, even if we were not carried through space fifty miles an hour—and could not send word in a few minutes to New Orleans, that cotton had risen a farthing in the pound at Liverpool. It is by these things, and things like these, the results of a highly stimulated mechanical and scientific ingenuity, that the restless spirit of the age is kept excited. We see the effect already upon the youth of the land, yet in their teens, who are so early in life drawn into the vortex, that they are scarcely allowed time to get a smattering of mental and moral science; so that there is an increasing multitude of them who know almost nothing about almost everything, and who understand every thing *without*, better than they do the microcosm *within*. There are too many now sent adrift in early life upon the rolling sea of business, with money in their eye, and without the ballast of discipline and high moral principle, which can only be secured by an attentive and thorough study of the moral powers and laws of their spiritual

being. Will it be wonderful that what of ballast they have, will be treated as one treats the ballast of the balloon — thrown overboard when they find that it prevents them from rising? “Rem! quocumque modo rem;” this must needs be the reigning adage, should material prosperity become the general idol, the touchstone of values, the measure of time and talent, as there is danger of its becoming. Charming results of scientific invention, when its clever discoveries shall be mainly applied to finding the materials for a golden calf, and building roads and cars by which the maddened pilgrims may be carried to the shrine to dance round it!

Here lies a large field for educators. They must resist with a wise and steady firmness the tendency manifest in many quarters to furnish an education, which under the pretence of giving a *practical* training —*practical* indeed!—stimulates the quickened blood, instead of lifting the soul into the calm regions of spiritual thought, where it may find a rational composure which it needs now more than ever. No education which stops short of this—which ignores this—much more, which openly or by indirection impugns this—which treats the human creation as a mere bundle of sensations—which obtrudes into the highest place the physical sciences, which have so arrogantly claimed as exclusively their own, the titles of positive and practical; no education, which on the ground that all are not agreed in religion shall exclude a distinctive Chris-

tianity and teach nothing that will shock even the delicate nerves of atheism ; no education, however polished it may be, which does this, can fail ultimately to sharpen the tools and strengthen the arms of social evil, and help men to become adepts in what one may well call “the sublime mechanics of depravity.” The question of a popular education, and education for the masses, is one of unspeakable moment ; and no one who has watched the current of discussion which it has created, can have failed to notice that the materializing philosophism of the day is not without hopes of making such a popular system the medium of diffusing its peculiar principles. Beginning in negations, it will first of all quietly aim to substitute in the place of a morality which draws its impulses, laws and sanctions from the word of God, that inert morality (we call it by the gentlest name) which rests its power upon a mere expediency and present utility ; an exchange of granite rock for shifting mud. And what must be the consequence, if the drift of educational training shall be to teach the youth of our land that all knowledge which bears upon their spiritual nature, their duty and destiny, is unworthy of concern, and impractical, because it will not help to build a ship, work a farm or a steam-mill, or heal a broken leg ? Yet such teaching falls in only too well with the tendency of the unquiet spirit of the age. Ah ! were it possible to simply drop the knowledge of God and moral law out of the catalogue of human sciences, the evils would be enormous, but

not so immediately destructive to the texture of society. But no such merely negative position is possible. Man has a heart, and if it be not prepossessed with good, it will be with evil. There are places in that heart which cannot be filled by any material science, and which if not filled by a positive morality, will be by a positive immorality, which will ultimately break the cobweb restraints of mere expediency, and end in a series of frauds, violences, and sensualities, such as the worst of superstitions never engendered.

You will not do me the injustice of imagining that any disparagement of the achievements of physical science is intended in the preceding remarks ; or any belief that they are necessarily antagonistic to the cultivation of our higher nature and relations ; or any questioning of their possibly beneficial though indirect effects upon the moral conditions of society. I object only to their supremacy ; I hold only that they are not “the top and crown” of acquirement. I plead only that our institutions of learning, and especially our venerable alma mater, shall train men—whole-souled, full-orbed men—all whose sides in turn behold the sun. Then they will prove conservative in the highest sense. Then the tracks, along which steam and electricity are now the carriers of the commodities of commerce, may carry also ideas and their influences, and we may have occasion to be grateful for the quickness and cheapness of the conveyance without fearing that the flying thought will only serve to hasten the dissolution of society. Then we shall see motion without commotion

—order without stagnation—energy without phrenzy. Then shall all the greater and lesser orbs of our social world resemble those which, in the mighty heavens, reveal the power of a grand central attraction, rapidly and ceaselessly moving on, but in such a divine harmony that they seem to lie in beautiful repose on the bosom of immensity. Then shall *progress* be a sustained advance, like the “*reposing motion*” of the eagle ;

“Ye cannot see the stirring of his wings,
And yet he soars.”

Poor Richard—a name you will reverence, ye Philadelphians ! as the name of a wise observer—hated noise, confusion and hurry. One of his quaint sayings, is this—“the worst wheel of the cart is the most noisy.” The din we hear around us reminds a reflective man of the worst wheel of the cart.

Let me now invite you to turn in another direction, and you will discover additional necessity for the conservative christian influence of our seminaries of learning. I have already referred to it, but it deserves a more special notice than the time which usage has allotted to this discourse will permit. I refer to the antagonism which, it is affirmed by some, exists between the cardinal truths of religion and the results of modern scientific investigation. Such an alleged antagonism has always afforded a malignant satisfaction to those who are predisposed to hail every plausible appearance of contradiction between the works and the word of

God ; and in our own times, we find this class holding a jubilee over every new discovery of natural laws, as if the very penetralia of being were about to be laid bare, the eternity and inherent capability of material forces demonstrated, the soul proved to be a secretion, a personal and intelligent maker of all a needless fiction of priesthood, and of course personal responsibility to moral law shorn of its disturbing power.

Pity for the schemers and contempt for their dreams will mingle with the smile which crosses the face of a true christian philosophy, at the thought that the wonderful ingenuity which has invented the boat machine, the spinning machine, and the road machine, can with equal ease put the human soul, with its spiritual and mechanical powers, upon wheels, and shape its opinions and govern its motions, as if it were a lump of iron, which, put into one end of the machine crude, comes forth from the other, a perfect horse-shoe.

I have heard expectations of the kind I have before mentioned, avowed, and they form the substance of the pantheistic materialism of much so-called philosophy, which has made its appearance on the stage, in the patched robes of Spinoza and the earlier philosophers of the Greek and Hindoo schools, and whose material godhead was long ago described by Æschylus.

*Zεὺς ἐότιν αὶ θῆρ
Ζεύς τε γῆ
Ζεύς δε ουρανὸς
Ζεύς τα ὡάντα.*

It has been asked whether there is anything in the

nature of the physical sciences, or in the modes in which they have been investigated, that tends to, and encourages this materialism? Not in their nature; for the obvious reason that many, and those among the most eminent of the scholars of natural science, have altogether escaped any such tendency. The names of Cuvier, Davy, Herschel, Buckland, Brewster, Owen, Miller, not to speak of a host of others, furnish conclusive proofs that faith and science are natural friends, not natural foes: twin sisters of congenial dispositions and aims. But when men devote themselves to such a dealing with matter and its organic forms and laws, as to leave no room for a study of the other departments of knowledge, it is in the nature of things that they will become, first indifferent and then sceptical as to every thing which cannot be weighed in the scales, dissected with the knife, or put to some other experimentum crucis, and this has often been the result of one-sided investigations. One who wishes to see the philosophy of this phenomenon, this madness of “undevout” science, satisfactorily laid open, will only need to study the profound observations of Whewell on this point, in his work on the inductive sciences.

With such a tendency of certain schools to materialism, and of course to a rejection of all supernatural religious and moral science—it is the part of our christian institutions and their scholars to employ themselves in making an ample and scientific examination of the theories of the day, with a view of exposing the presumptuous fallacies, correcting the alleged facts, and

thus check the hasty generalizations which have made the history of natural science too much a history of short-lived theories, each of which has lasted only long enough to strangle its predecessor. It cannot be denied that many have donned the robes of science, and spoken in her name, with an ex-cathedra air which shows that dogmatism, any more than hypocrisy, is not confined to the church. Lord Bacon's "idols of the understanding" are still the objects of worship in certain temples of science. They are "hasty assent," "hasty generalization," and "the abandoning universality:" and in proportion as these idols are worshipped, will the faultless image of truth be forsaken. To the calm, patient, cautious man of science, who labors with genial ardor in his favorite study, without insisting that it alone deserves the regards of mankind,—to one who weighs well his facts, and refuses to draw from partial data inferences which a larger view of facts will falsify,—to such a one (and many such our own university has furnished to the ranks of medicine and the natural sciences) a profound reverence is due. Those who regard the book of nature as that "elder scripture writ by God's own hand," will owe a debt of gratitude to him who, by tracing the magical combinations of natural elements and forces, will enlarge and elevate their sentiments of reverence for the grand "maker of them all." We not only have no jealousy of his researches, but will gladly and confidently accompany such an one into the deep mines of nature, because he carries with him the safety lamp of modesty and truth; the

fire-damps are dangerous only to the presumptuous explorer.

That there are such explorers—that there is much pretentious sciolism, which is not so ignorant as it is dishonest, which is ready to falsify, or pervert, or suppress the sacred facts of science, rather than not build up a theory by which they may secure the praise of originality and profundity—cannot be doubted. You will recall an example of such sciolism in a late theory of developement, which, whatever be the professed intentions of the author, not only struck directly at the authority of revelation, but at the very being of God—by endowing material atoms with self-inherent forces, capable, during a long succession of ages, of developing themselves from the lowest into the highest organisms. This was literally “science, falsely so called.” For when honest and intelligent investigators came forth to expose the fallacies of the “vestiges of creation,” it was shown that its alleged facts were unscientific falsehoods, its cases of spontaneous generation, from the *acarus Crossii* to the mould on the musty bread, assumptions which were unsupported by demonstrative evidence, and contradicted by all the natural analogies—and its supposed order of developement of the higher from the lower organisms, falsified by the organic remains in the geological strata. And yet the smooth style, and ingenious inventions of this work of romance, intended for popular effect, have given to it a still continued popularity; edition after edition, in the country of its birth, attesting the impression it has

made on the shallow curiosity of the public mind, and confirming the fact already exemplified in ten thousand cases—that there are many who like the logic of infidelity so well because it is the logic of infidelity, that they have no disposition to inquire whether any and what refutation it has met with.

This is but one instance of many which the annals of natural science afford, and in which a weapon intended to demolish the adamant gates of moral and religious truth, has broken in the hands that held it. Within my own recollection, the French savans who accompanied Napoleon into Egypt, discovered in the ruined Egyptian temple of Dendera, a stone sculptured with zodiacal signs, and which they introduced into the scientific world, with a flourish of trumpets, first as an undoubted relic of a remote Egyptian antiquity, and then as an astronomic proof that the world was of an indefinite antiquity, thus giving the lie to the Mosaic chronology. Subsequent examination by others proved the sculpture to be of Roman origin, and that mighty hieroglyphic stone of Dendera, which was to have crushed the Mosaic history, and of consequence, the Christian, now reposes quietly in the Bibliotheque Royale of Paris, where I have seen it—and there is not even a French infidel “so poor as to do it reverence.”

Notwithstanding its defeats, it is a mortifying, but significant fact, that science, falsely so called, is not yet tired of pitting its strength against the doctrine of an intelligent cause. It has gone so far as to assume the broad ground, that science cannot admit any design to

be apparent in the phenomenal universe, that is, any final cause or end for which any thing was formed. This theory, which seemed to be effectually demolished by Cuvier in his controversy with St. Hilaire, has again been virtually revived by the great generalizer of our day, Comte, who takes the position, that all questions of the supernatural origin and ends of the phenomenal universe, shall be left among those inscrutable mysteries with which science has nothing to do; a theory this, which in the very act of making so extravagant a demand upon the abnegation of the human mind, as the demand that it shall stop short at the most momentous point of its inductions, betrays the consciousness of the weakness of scientific materialism, and its inconsistency with the tendency and drift of scientific facts, and thus affords promise of the final settlement of all points in dispute between science and revelation, in favor of the divine records.

Already has the tendency to such a settlement made its appearance in several directions. Thus the *nebular hypothesis* of La Place, intended as it was to explain creation without a creator, and to make the elements and forces of it eternal; besides asserting the fact of vast changes, indicating an astonishing instability in the career of the planetary universe, and thus overturning the preceding theory of astronomy, namely, that the revolutions of the planetary system were so even and regular that they bore every indication of an eternal duration and durability—beside this, this theory includes the once-scouted doctrine that light existed

before the Sun, and the outer before the inner orbs of the system ; in both these points harmonizing with the Mosaic account. *Geology* too, though too often in the hands of investigators who, if they have no enmity, certainly have no partiality for the scripture history of nature, has, in several important respects, overturned the old doctrine of the eternal and invariable order of nature, as it was called, and corroborated the Mosaic account of the recent origin of man. The theories of this science have been so often abandoned or modified, so many of its phenomena, the existence of limestone and coal, for example, have found such contradictory explanations, its reputed facts, have so often been exposed as mistakes, and its researches, when compared with the extent of the surface and depth of the globe, have been as yet so partial, that there is reason to believe that a more complete collection and comparison of data will thoroughly disprove the now common assumption, that the changes which have passed over the earth have required unnumbered myriads of ages to bring them about ; an assumption which, for one, I do not believe to be necessary to account for the phenomena, and which, it appears to me, can only be made to harmonize with the scripture cosmogony by a very pliable system of interpretation. So too, in regard to the records of *History*, which have undergone a very searching investigation in our day, its great authorities and discoveries have, as you all know, confirmed the sacred history, in a wonderful manner. *Chronology* too, after patronizing the Chinese and Hindoo anti-

quities, which put back the commencement of the historical era to a point much earlier than that assigned by the Mosaic records, has now discarded the pretensions of China and Hindostan, and set up the superior claim of the Egyptian; Lepsius and Bunsen, of our day, being their interpreters. But on the other hand, the investigations of Mr. Poole of England, into the sculptures of the Memnonium at Thebes, confirmed by the highest British authority, Professor Airy of the Greenwich Observatory, have gone far to establish the accuracy of scripture chronology. In like manner, the comparison of languages, and the study of the races of men, under the auspices of ethnological investigations, are in the same direction, tending to establish the fact, of one common source for the great human family, a fact called in question by some naturalists, and as stoutly maintained by others of equal authority, who side with the plain teachings of the scripture records.

I have thus rapidly sketched the general relations which science now holds to the great moral and religious elements which enter so deeply into the very heart of social life, because so far as it still presents itself in an attitude of opposition to the authority of our religious institutes, it deserves the closest attention of our seats of Christian learning. It has a vast moral and social significance. The day was, when sceptical speculation was comparatively harmless, by the fact of its being limited to the few. But science has been popularized, the intense curiosity of a multitude of readers has been awakened by the field of thought thus

newly opened to them, and whatever profit or injury can be done by scientific investigations, must be shared in by the general public. With such facilities for spreading its power, our learned institutions and our cultivated men, who value, as a necessity, the social influences of religious truth, must confront the danger with which society has been threatened from this cause—by a faithful and able examination of scientific facts and theories, and by clearly exposing the fallacy of hasty generalizations whenever they occur in a form and from a source calculated to do mischief. In doing this, they will prove conservative at once of science and society.

Nor ought they to disdain to give a proper degree of attention to certain so-called sciences, which though they may have some elements of truth in them, are left so much in the hands of empirics and credulous dupes, that it requires great labor to winnow the few grains of wheat from the chaff. Our intelligent guides must interest themselves in a rigid examination of their claims, because they connect themselves with questions in psychological science, and because, as now handled, they are unsettling the faith of multitudes in the grand elemental truths of politics and science, as well as religion and morals. When it comes to be believed that men are what they are, by reason of a physical organization subject only to irresistible physical forces, (and this has been the drift of *phrenological* teachings) it must be obvious that the whole basis and frame-work of society must be removed, and an irresponsible ma-

terialism established. Or, if by a new sort of insight which despises the old laws and limitations of knowledge, we may look into the brain to tell its thoughts; into the stomach to tell its diseases; into distant regions to tell what is going on there; it is clear that your books and tools of learning may be given to the fire. And especially if the venerable Franklin may be called from the other world to teach your classes, (though it be in bad English,) how to correct the mistakes he made in his favorite science; and Sir Isaac Newton to inform them that his ideas of the law of gravitation were blunders; I see no reason why the chairs of our faculties of science, law and medicine—of course all theological chairs—may not be vacated, and lectures given through the new medium of rappings. The demons are not dead, but visible and invisible, are doing mischief in every direction, and our common schools, our colleges, are not safe from their intrusion. One drift is to be perceived about all these new discoveries; it is the tendency to the disturbance of society, by the creation of a demand for changes in its radical conditions and laws, which shall comport with these alleged discoveries. The mention of this fact leads me to close my remarks by asking your patience while I advert more particularly to this result of the influences which I have been laying before you. I allude to questions of social reform. If the excitements of the public mind by the several causes we have noted, were excitements of curiosity in search of amusement and relaxation, they might disturb the surface without

reaching the deep places of life. But they all point in the direction of changes in its fundamental conditions. *Reform* is the watchword. How far the term should be changed and *revolution* substituted, may be determined by looking at what has been proposed, and in part accomplished in certain quarters ; at principles and acts which illustrate each other. A running notice is all we shall attempt.

Starting from the acknowledged truth that there is room for improvement in the state of mankind, they diverge from the path of a Christian philanthropy, not only in their ideal of a perfect social state, but in the measures which they consider necessary to remove our burdens and destroy our vices. Let us judge what their idea is by the plans of reform they propose. When analyzed, these may be said to consist in a total change in the relations of *property* and *family*. The rights and obligations of property, of marriage, of the parental and filial relations, are to be so essentially altered as to be in fact destroyed : mere community of *property* is not the most essential feature of the new social economy, but, in spite of the attempts to disguise the thing under a flimsy gauze of words ; a community *in other respects* deeply affecting the interests of personal and social purity. The change in the relation of the sexes and of parents and children, if indeed the system when carried out can be said to recognize parentage at all, is radical, and must needs obliterate a large class of sentiments and duties which are now

enjoined as normal, not only by the statutes of Scripture, but by all previously existing civil codes.

In any other than this unquiet age such propositions would not be regarded sane. But absurd as they are, it is worthy of observation, that even among those who refuse to be called Socialists or Fourierites—the reasonings on which these theories are based—the prominence they give to mere material interests—their assaults upon the principles and laws which now regulate society—their views of marriage, and the family relations—their attacks upon the Christian revelation, which is the most effectual breakwater they have to encounter, have loosened both the notions and practices of many unreflecting or fanatical minds. Writers, and lecturers, and prints which disclaim the name, and in some respects object to the plans of socialistic reform, are nevertheless playing into the hands of these revolutionary theorists, and helping forward their experiments upon the texture of society. *Crotchety* they may be called, and so they are, but when it is remembered that such an organization as they propose has temptations of different sorts to proffer to different classes—an equalization of property to one—a freedom from the restraints of marriage to another—an easy and irresponsible life to another—these crotches are not without peril. Without the least apprehension that such theories, warring as they do upon the very axioms of social existence, could have an ultimate general success; they may loosen the joints of society

in certain places, and lead to hurtful experiments upon our civil and political institutions. The *rights* of labor ; the *right* of a man to a living from society ; the *right* to a portion of the world's surface ; the oppressions of labor by capital ; have been already pressed with taking eloquence by political aspirants. "Vote yourself a farm" is one of the recognized formulas, and anti-rentism is a flower from this stem. Hatred to what is above it, in intelligence, wealth, or position, is its stimulus. Its very aim is to create class-jealousies by sordid appeals to sordid prejudices.

When in the convulsive efforts of 1848, in Europe, the really oppressed nations struck a blow for liberty, the disciples of these theories proved far more numerous than was supposed, and mingling in the strife, frightened away from her standards the more rational friends of liberty, who were not willing to fight even her battles in such company. We have the testimony of the noble Mazzini, that the element of socialism in the late contests, and not the bayonets of despotism, is responsible for the fearful reaction which has taken place ; nor is it to be wondered at, for despotic government has a saving clause of which socialistic anarchy is destitute. We too would prefer it as the lesser evil.

If any further argument against these theories of modern reform were necessary, it is found in the fact, that generally they are sworn allies with the materialism and anti-Christianity which is now the less to be dreaded, because it has adopted the jargon of a senti-

mental pantheism, and smatters, in its mystical way, of the soul of humanity, of the immortality of man, and of God. God in nature, God in history, God in society. What sort of God? Hear one who seems to have examined it with a keen eye—Mazzini.* It talks of God without feeling Him; of Jesus Christ while dressing Him in the robes of Bentham; of immortality while confining it to earth; of European solidarity while making Paris the brain of the world; commenting under one guise or another, exclusively, on the dogma of *physical well-being*, in the style of Volney and Bentham. We are not to be cheated by its professions of liberty, fraternity, equality. Its liberty is dyed with human blood. Its philanthropy is that of Robespierre, who proposed to abolish the death-penalty; of his compeer, who with bloody hands reared pet doves; and of the female citizens who took their knitting and gossipped on the steps of the guillotine, while they waited for the tumbril and its daily load of human victims. At that pregnant chapter in the history of infidel reform, we can only glance, but a glance may read the lessons written there. We have received many valuable things from the old world, but God save us from the importations of Pantheistic Atheism, which springing from the brains of so-called philosophers, has been distilled into the uneducated mass, and which, I have reason to believe, infects a large number of those who from Germany and elsewhere, are crowding to our shores. They have their books and journals, in which

* Westminster Review, April, 1852.

both our Christianity and our political conservatism are blasphemously assailed. Combining themselves with the intense individualism, which in all ages chafes at the most reasonable restraints, and which derives a vast momentum from the really large measure of liberty of speech and action guarantied by our political institutions; taking advantage also of the shallow smattering and real ignorance, which in spite of the schoolmaster are to be found in our land, and of the other materializing tendencies we have elsewhere spoken of, these schemes of reform are not to be despised as incapable of mischief. Thousands have already been their dupes and victims, for while they believed they were about to be relieved of their fetters, they were in fact stripped of their garments. The caustic comparison of Burke, intended for the French reformers of 1789, applies to these "children who are ready to hack their aged parent 'society' into pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their parent's life."

These, and kindred "root and branch" systems of revolutions, furnish a proper field for the conservative influence of Christian philosophy at our centres of learning. Inasmuch as the problems of society are not abstractions or novelties; are not to be reasoned *a priori* but *a posteriori*; are not to be solved by any logic but that of experience, the field of history (which forms one of the parts of every course of liberal educa-

tion) must supply the materials for refuting and denouncing these and all similar empirical schemes. We must look to our literary guides to fetch the great light, experience, from the stern to the prow of the ship, for we need it to shine upon the course we are to go, not the course we have gone over. It must be shown, as it can be, that the rejection of the religious element, even where it existed only in perverted forms, has always been attended by demoralization, and has made the course of government a series of reactions and collapses, ending in final disorganization. With such material facts ancient literature abounds, and in this lies one of the most conclusive arguments for the encouragement of that classical learning to which we are indebted for the preservation and exposition of its ancient records.

But more than this. We must justly look to our seats of learning, to show, and this too is capable of historic demonstration, that when we trace the currents and cross-currents of the historic life of our race, the most clearly marked line of social *progress*, is coincident with the line of the Christian Faith. Not to dwell upon the fact, that this Faith affirms the possibility not only, but the prophetic certainty of progress; it alone suggests its true conditions, and furnishes the requisite impulses. You will not require me to enlarge upon these—but it is enough to point out the fact that just in the degree, and wherever these forces have had free access to the centres of human action, a palpable advance in knowledge, liberty, and a pure refinement, has been perceptible; and the poverty, injustice, op-

pression, and licentiousness, which are the ulcers of a depraved society, have precisely in that degree been checked and healed. The broad current of its influence is to be traced through the latitudes of time, like that great gulf stream which washes our shores. Storms have often beat upon its surface, that have seemed to turn it backward, and even obliterate for a time the traces of its existence, but it has flowed on. The current of Christian civilization has already outlasted every other. Those of Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome have been swallowed up in the sands of time, and whatever of their waters have been preserved, have been absorbed by the power of this civilization. At the present moment, society is strictly speaking in *progress*, only in this line. Chinese and Hindoo, and Mohammedan civilization have for ages been, to say the least, stationary. The nations that have crossed the influence of the great Christian ideas, displacing them by puerile substitutes—Italy and Spain for example—have lost their impulse, and fallen from the front to the rear rank, in knowledge, liberty and purity. Surely these are impressive facts, which prove that of all that is *practical* in an age that boasts of being practical, these principles are the most practical, because they furnish the propulsive yet centripetal force which carries all else forward in harmony toward the ideal perfection; and because they show us how and where to lay down the assymptote to a curve otherwise unapproachable.

Gentlemen, when I claim these results in behalf of

Christianity, I am speaking for the inherent tendency of her grand principles, and the facts and institutes which are the vehicles of those principles. It is not upon an effete formal religion that we can rely for conservative, yet reformatory power. Upon no muttered or counted prayers, no dramatic worship of pride or terror, no ostentatious pharisaism of a sect, no enchantments, do we rely for its power to inform and control beneficially the individual or public life—but upon principles. Were I to undertake to enumerate these principles, I might be suspected of forgetting that I am on the platform and not in the pulpit, and that I have already taxed your patience long enough. Nor is it necessary I should do so, because I feel assured that these evangelic elements are easily discriminated from all the *effete* negations which have often assumed their name, and attempted the exorcism of social life in vain. They form the *credenda* and *agenda* of all the great Christian communions, which, however they diverge in minor respects, agree in considering the cross—not the cross as a symbol, not the cross sculptured in stone or embroidered in gold, not the cross of the herald, the inquisitor or crusader, but the cross as the witness to God's divine love and justice, and man's deliverance from a miserable bondage, as the centre of all social harmonies, the true philosophy of all social reform; because it affirms the possibility, supplies the motives, and suggests the means for realizing the ultimate triumph of good over evil. This is the power which alone can remove the stone from the grave of

our still buried humanity, and thus prepare for the final act, Resurrection.

The aggregate influence of the scholarly men who have gone forth from the school to occupy places in the commonwealth, must necessarily be great. But that it may be good as well as great, we must look to those who have the training of them. The professional character ought to be as sound morally as intellectually, illustrating that noble union, *mind and heart equally cultivated*. Thus far in the history of our university, beginning with its first provost down to the venerable Wylie, the last of its extended corps who has left the world, full of years, and crowned with the honors of a useful and benevolent life, the general influence of its instructors has been salutary ; they have, in the main, been eminent and excellent, for they have recognized the authority of those grand truths of which I have spoken. Should it ever be otherwise—should our institution ever divorce physical and moral science, and much more, place them in antagonism, teaching in one lecture room what is assailed openly or by indirection in another—in a word, should it ever cease to be Christian, in its classics, its mathematics, its cosmogony, chronology, and history ; in its medicine and jurisprudence ; in its literature, and above all its ethics, its malign influence will be in proportion as its academic chairs are filled with ability. It will be a destroyer, not a builder of the social temple.

Our hope that this may never be so, is quickened by the repute in which its present instructors are held.

How noble the theatre for their learned influence ! How fair the opportunity of making their mark upon the country ! What glorious inducements to work and work well, are held out in the prospective career of the nation ! Voices from the graves where repose the mighty dead ; among them noble patriots, statesmen, philanthropists and scholars, who once trod these streets, and shared in the culture of our alma mater, are heard cheering them on, and inviting us to stand by them while they employ their plastic skill in shaping the young republic ! When they make honest men they will do this most effectually, for honesty is the grand necessity of the world, at this time, in its science as well as its commerce, in its politics as well as its theology. Its source is to be found in the heaven-illumined knowledge which shines upon all the human relations. Of all the methods of government, the one we have adopted depends more than any other upon this, for its very possibility ; for here the governed are the governors, the subjects of law are the law-givers. The freedom they have claimed for themselves, though great, is not too great, if greatly used. To use it greatly, its owners must be qualified, and (in the noble words of Burke,) they are qualified for freedom “ in “exact proportion to their disposition to put moral “chains upon their appetites ; in proportion as their “love of justice is above their rapacity ; in proportion “as their soundness and sobriety of judgment is above “their vanity and presumption ; in proportion as they “are more disposed to listen to the council of the wise

“and good than to the flattery of knaves. Society
“cannot exist unless a controlling power upon appetite
“and will be placed somewhere ; and the less there is
“without, the more they need within. It is ordained
“in the eternal constitution of things, that men of
“intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions
“forge their fetters.”

To these fundamental truths we must often recur, lest in the excitements which rise from the abundance of our external advantages, great beyond precedent, and which have already called forth not as much loyal love of country and more of a boasting vanity than is creditable—we should forget that all sound prosperity is but the flowering of these principles, and must perish when they become forgotten. May our alma mater, who has already sent forth many noble exemplars and expounders of them, continue to consecrate all her resources to their propagation and enforcement. True learning can have no higher aims. She has not always remembered it. “Learning,” to use the words of Bacon, “has had many peccant humors.” With his marvellous sagacity he enumerates some of them, and closes the catalogue in words which I will quote as the conclusion of the discourse to which you have listened with a patience for which, gentlemen, I thank you.

“The greatest error of all the rest, is the mistaking
“or misplacing of the last or furthest end of knowledge ;
“for men have entered into a desire of learning and
“knowledge sometimes upon a natural curiosity and
“inquisitive appetite : sometimes to entertain their

“minds with variety and delight: sometimes for ornament and reputation: sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction: and most times for lucre and profession. Seldom sincerely, to give a true account of their gift of reason to the benefit and use of men. As if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereon to rest a searching and restless spirit; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect: or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon: or a fort or commanding ground, for strife and contention: or a shop for profit or sale: and not a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man’s estate. But this is that which will indeed dignify and exalt knowledge, if *contemplation* and *action* may be more nearly and straitly conjoined than they have been. As both heaven and earth do conspire and contribute to the use and benefit of man, so the end ought to be, from both philosophies, to separate and reject vain speculations, and to preserve and augment whatever is solid and fruitful.”

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